

The Ecumenical Institute: Chicago
Collegium
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10/16/70

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SPIRIT ANALYSIS OF SUB-ASIA

The main item I want to talk about in regard to Sub-Asia is the "spirit edge" of the Sub-asian or what we sometimes call the "spirit problem." Perhaps we need first to look at the Sub-asian ethos. When you walk into India, you are immediately hit with poverty, poverty, poverty. You can find poverty anywhere.....like in an apartment here on the West Side of Chicago.....or in a slum in Recife.....or in a back street in Bangkok.....or in a hovel in Freetown or Cairo. But in India the poverty just smothers you. It crushes you. Because coupled with poverty are people, people, people. They overwhelm you.

The overburdening weight of dead structures is also present. The British legacy is that of structures. But life has gone out of them and nothing is left but the dead weight. This is coupled with the popular religion of Hinduism where the wheel of fate grinds on and compounds everything into a horrifying weight. Everything is completely ineffective and horribly inefficient. Therefore to move within the structures is an extremely difficult job. It's like walking in molasses up to your hips. It's like trying to get out of quicksand when you're up to your neck. This just goes on and on as it has been going on for thousands of years.

For example, our materials coming from Bombay were shipped with a promise of delivery in five days. Three weeks later, after trips, screaming, patient quiet conversations, yelling, telegrams, telephone calls, and so forth, the materials finally wound up in the local warehouse, from which the last leg of the journey was a five-hour trip by oxcart. Books promised to us in ten days showed up thirty-five days later. These happenings sort of affect your whole being. I could go on and on with multiple examples of impotence and ineffectiveness.

But all of that is relatively easy compared to moving outside of the structures. This is impossible. For example, just re-routing your plane ticket to get from Bombay to Chicago was impossible. It took hours and hours just to re-arrange plans that don't fit the normal structures. This is the kind of impossibility that you have to overcome.

One last example of the impossibility of the situation. A man at the ITI from Ceylon developed a growth on the side of his neck. This frightened him and it frightened all of us. But he thought he would wait until the end of the ITI and stop at the Christian hospital in Vellore near Madras on his way back to Ceylon. The growth enlarged instead of going down so we thought he'd better go immediately, just for a checkup. He left his baggage and belongings in his room as he thought he would be gone briefly for a checkup and then return.

But the doctors upon examination thought the growth might be malignant, so they operated on him. They stripped out his glands and after releasing him from the hospital told him to convalesce a few days in Madras and then catch a plane home instead of returning to the ITI.

So he called up and asked us to ship his baggage to him. We shipped his baggage. He called two or three days later and said that it

hadn't come; please send him the receipt. We mailed him the receipt, but it got lost. He was stuck with no money. His passport and travelers cheques were in his baggage. He telephoned, "I don't know what to do as my wife will be arriving soon and she thinks I have the money. I can't go back to Ceylon because I don't have a passport. I can't move. I'm sunk."

So we wired his station manager and did everything else we could think of. Still no baggage. We were asked to please trace his baggage from our end. So we contacted the station manager and he told us that we would have to trace the baggage from the other end. This and more all went on for at least ten days. Finally the ITI ended and we left. So there is probably one man in Madras still trying to get back to Ceylon. He couldn't possibly prove he was a Ceylonese citizen. So, for the rest of his life he will be a man without a country.

Well it didn't quite end that way only because we know how to blast and ways to move. We finally got something to happen only because we got the impossible situation into the dead-weight structures, and let them, and helped them, grind out. This is the kind of difficulty that you're up against there--not just now and then, but all the time--it's a way of life.

Now to the spirit problem. My main formal categories are (note chart) LUCIDITY, SELF-IMAGE, GLOBALITY, AND UR. These hold the spirit edge of the Sub-asians. I think it is crucial that we attempt a depth study of all people we come in contact with especially since we are now working with so many people around the world. We must see both the sameness and the difference in confronting them and working with them.

On the left side of the chart let me put reflection, passion, possibility, and death-urge. These are phenomenological categories and represent a progression into the depths.

The LUCIDITY of the Subasian seems on initial contact to be naive. They seem to operate as self-satisfied people. However, when they are shoved up against their lucidity and reflection begins, their life collapses on them and is filled with emptiness. So everyone came to us, you might say, self-satisfied, trying to live out of bourgeois images and goals. But as soon as they were required to reflect they collapsed into emptiness. They would even use the old cliches, "You are rude if you intrude into another person's life," and would attempt to hide in a kind of "let me alone" individualism.

But at the same time they would hide in corporate structures to preserve their individualism. One thing came out that illustrated this keenly. After we had been going a couple of weeks and saw that we were probably going to make it the whole six, we began to worry about the morale of the group. It was high, and what was worrying us was whether we were getting to where the spirit problem or spirit edge was. One Subasian fellow said to us, "Yeah, they're doing everything you tell them, but that's because they're told. When they get home everything will be exactly the same." Now that was a cynical remark but it was a lucid one. That's their way of hiding; that's their way of preserving their individualism--just blend into the structures and flow with them yet fundamentally not change.

THE SPIRIT EDGE
of the
SUB-ASIAN

	LUCIDITY	SELF-IMAGE	GLOBALITY	UR
REFLECTION	EMPTINESS	POWERLESSNESS	COLLAPSE	SUFFERING
PASSION	FOR RELIGION	TO BE THE RELIGIOUS	FOR SUB-ASIA	FOR ALL
POSSIBILITY	FOR CHURCH	TO BE CREATIVE	FOR SPIRIT LIFE	TO EMBODY ALL
DEATH-URGE	GLAZED	IMPOTENT	CRUSHED	DEFIANT

When their lucidity is pushed deeper you see their passion come out. It is passion for religion. Or better put, it is how to relate the world to the religious or the religious to the world. But I would prefer the former, how to relate their lucidity about the world to the religious. You see, their great gift in history is that they have been a deeply religious people. They subtly know that. But how do they relate the world they are actually living in to the deeps of the religious dimension of their lives. The lucidity they have says this is possible. They must do it but they are blocked at that point, not having adequate tools to do it; how to live in a world without authority and mold out how their new and actual world can be related to the religious deeps.

The next level is possibility. Their lucidity today shows them brand new possibilities for the church. This came about also in seeing new possibilities and responsibility for their own lives and the world. They saw the role of the church in the world with great clarity. Theology came alive for them.

You know the perversion of Christianity in the United States. Well, this is compounded in the mission field where there still lingers a kind of perverted nineteenth centuryism without at least the fresh winds of renewal you have here. The renewal has to come (at least at the present time) from outside. But the theological renewal is being grounded in their lives.

The Christian symbols including worship, and the relation of the Christ story to their lives came alive for them in a relevant and fully human manner. It began to break loose new possibilities in their lives in amazing ways. Of course the Divine Activity is giving a brand new context of humanness to them. But what the Word does when it becomes alive in them is allow them to see these new possibilities in a frightening manner.

This kind of possibility brings forth a death-urge which at this point is what I want to call just being glazed. A glaze is when wrestling with the death-urge you put a film or coat over life in order to hide.

They glaze themselves against the horror of life which is a direct confrontation with the overwhelming mass of people and poverty. I'm not talking about someone that comes in from the West like myself and sees it and says, "My God." It's the same thing for them only they have to face this day in and day out, year in and year out. No wonder they glaze themselves. They are utterly naked and exposed to their contingency.

Yet this takes a strange turn when they begin to open up and face the new possibilities which hit them. We took a trip to a city about eighty miles from us. It was an industrial city with a population of about half a million people. We gridded it, took it apart and put it back together, using our methodology. They discerned the trends, worked out a four point program, etc. In the midst of this new kind of possibility they really came alive and began to see things they never saw before. Sometimes it would take a mundane form. One said, "I saw a beggar." My mouth fell open, "My God, man," I said to myself, "haven't you seen a million in the last year? What do you mean, 'I have seen a beggar.'" Or another one, "I saw a man with only one arm." It's just like he says this for the first time.

It would be like a little kid here, who had never been in the slums, coming in saying, "I saw a beggar." Well, it was like they were bubbling with, "Look, look, I can see this, and that....."

So we were driving back at night in our crowded buses, and were starting up the steep hills with their tight curves, narrow roads and deep jagged chasms, and suddenly a wheel fell off one of the cars. You talk about their contingency coming back in upon them. That's all they could talk about then. In other words, the falling off of the wheel suddenly recrystallized their attitude. Their glaze was back. Their contingency hit them. They now had to reappropriate their possibility in a brand new way now. Naiveness was gone. That's the kind of dynamic that glazedness played in their wrestling with the death-urge.

The second formal category is SELF-IMAGE. The first way they grasp their lives upon reflection is one of powerlessness. You have no power whatsoever. This is not only because you are in this horrifying kind of cultural situation. You have the images coming out of the West that tell the non-West they are second class citizens. They have taken that into themselves. They see that because they are Subasians they have no power. Because they are non-West they are powerless. This self-depreciation also spills over into the church and they have great despair about it.

We really yanked the only thing they have to hang onto out from under them--that Christianity is some better "ism" than Hindium. When we yanked that out from under them, their response was they didn't have any power left as Christians. They couldn't be prideful any more of feeling that they were really good people, that they were nice Christian people over against the pagans. That kind of self-image of just utter powerlessness is constantly present and is woven into everything they do. When the shift came it was from the struggle to achieve perfection to live "on behalf of."

Their passion is to be the religious or to be the religious people. You can see that's similar to the category under lucidity. The struggle to be the religious people, it seems, was the major thing to break them loose from either their passivity or their moralism. This gave them a brand new way to break loose. They could be the religious ones. For them to see that a Christian human being could be the religious in the midst of Hinduism or in the midst of their great religious traditions just exploded them into a brand new passion.

The possibility here was to see that they had the capacity to be creative--and it was overwhelming that they could transcend their powerlessness, for example, by seeing their own significance--their bowing to the West was called into question by the new possibility. Also they have the image that you either have to be radical secularists or you have to jump back into ancient Hinduism with all its present perversions. Now they saw they had a way to transcend that image with brand new creativity. They saw what the new religious mode could do to and for them. They saw they could be creative, weld out models, and put them into history with results. A great dread hit them when they realized that, but it was a dread that had the polarity of fear and fascination.

On the other side of this kind of possibility is the death-urge. And here the death-urge takes the form of impotence. It would even take the form of pride of standing back and being proud that you had no desire. This you can see was coupled to a kind of popular Hinduism. They use their misery to hide from life. As one of our colleagues put it, it's like a fellow is looking at you with a sick smile on his face and saying, "Your lorry just ran over my foot." He says it like, that's just the way it is, it's always like that, it never changes. It's that kind of impotence--it just hangs on to its own misery.

Next is the third formal category of GLOBALITY. When they began to reflect they collapsed. Every vocation they could possibly see themselves hanging on to collapses across the board. Here again, the vocational crisis is in everything. Certainly in themselves as individuals and in anything they might tie into--the role of India in relationship to the Western world, etc. They would collapse back into impotence. India was impotent, the non-West was impotent, they were impotent. They could see themselves in no way related to globality.

And yet lucidity today means you have to be global, and that pushed at them greatly. So their passion would be broken loose from a kind of abstract concern for the world. They were told they ought to be concerned as Christians, so they had an abstract concern for the world. When they came alive, this delivered them to a passion for Sub-Asia. They saw they could be Subasians and break loose in a brand new way. Then they also had, on the other side of that, passion for the globe or for the world. These two awarenesses were not separated, of course, and their new understanding gave them a whole new lease onto that relationship.

This delivered them to see new possibility for the spirit life. They saw that they had the responsibility for the world in the dimension of the Spirit. You can imagine what a brand new break open or possibility this was for them. Here was a decision to be global people and to pick up the world. Their role now could be to give the whole world the vibrancy of the spirit dimension. They had that possibility as a brand new happening in the midst of their lives.

The death-urge over and against that was crushedness. They had a crushed victim image to begin with. When they took their possibility and pushed it into a relationship with the globe they cried, "What can we do?" In other words they struggled with the immensity of their decision because the whole globe was now upon them. You can see that where before they were fraught with glazedness and impotence, this is now compounded with global crushedness.

Over and against their particular UR what does this do to them? When they begin to reflect, the fact that they live in their kind of ur, rather than in our kind, causes them a deep kind of suffering. I am not referring to the pleasure-pain principle, but the deep suffering that comes out of struggling to be a human being.

They have the gift of reflection. They have this in their tradition and history. We (as their teachers) erred in the beginning. We weren't

sure where their spirit edge was or how to put our finger on it. Therefore we would fire a round, so to speak, at their spirit edge. They had great patience with us. They would sit there sort of pained and say in unspoken words, "You missed. Try again."

We were upset because they wouldn't reflect as we thought they should reflect. But they knew what it meant to reflect. The problem was, the only way they could reflect was in an outmoded context, which meant that if they tried to reflect in that context it would destroy them. On the other hand, to move out and try to reflect in a new context caused overwhelming spirit suffering. They were extremely sensitive to that, for reflection meant something far deeper to them. We'd push them because they wouldn't reflect. We had to, but we were looking at the wrong pressure point.

Ninety percent of the staff and ninety-five percent of the participants got sick. It was easy to get sick because it was so cold, you could catch anything. Because so much of the staff was getting sick, we had to constantly hold the line. We couldn't go around and have the kind of ease or luxury of getting sick.

So at first we didn't see that the Subasian sensitivity was so deep. Whereas we would get a cough, stomach-ache or have difficulty getting up in the morning, they would really get physically sick. Their legs would swell up, they'd have asthma, could hardly breath, and so forth. One man couldn't walk. Another man's blood pressure rose markedly. Another's arm became stiff. When they would have colds their fever would go way up, and so on. Reflection had a radical effect on their body. One of the staff called it "inverse yogi."

I'd get a little stomach-ache or something and would go to the nurse to get pills after breakfast. I couldn't even get into the office--all of those Subasians, who have been eating that food for 5,000 years, were there for the same thing.

We had one man who was there the full six weeks. He was in bed literally four weeks of that time. He was sick. With his colleagues and his priors working with him we finally got him out of bed. The Odyssey was a great event for him. He came back all wrapped up in coat, scarf, knitted cap, and so on. While wheezing and gasping desperately, he exclaimed, "I got a cold, but I didn't get sick." That was a great day for him.

So it finally came to us. For those people to reflect they had to make decisions to risk large swollen legs, temperatures of 100 plus, and so on. This is what I mean by their having to suffer to reflect. But this is just the beginning.

They have passion for the "all." This is where their reflections were. They did not reflect just about some things. They were forced to reflect about the "all," or, as they would put it, about the mystery, the mystery, the mystery. You never heard people in courses in the U. S. talk about the mystery that way. It wasn't just a simple reflection. We would

tell them that they ought to reflect about this and that, but again for them to reflect about anything forced them to reflect over the "all."

We would try to get them to embody an issue and they saw clearly new possibility, but it was a global possibility. Like reflection, they would hesitate and stand back. They couldn't just pick an issue up by itself. Because of their background or "Ur" they had to embody all. Therefore, when they made a commitment, brother, you could surmise that the commitment was to the deeps of their lives.

Lastly, the death urge brought defiance. Passive defiance is the way the death urge comes to them. They have great hatred for Hinduism which at the same time is a great hatred of their own culture. We had a Swami come the first Friday night. He was a cool cat. I mean to tell you he just came in and laid it on the line. They (the Subasians) began to boil and you could see explosions of hostility come out all over the place. I mean they brought up their heavy artillery and began to shoot at the Swami. There was just that sort of great hatred for their own being.

Passive defiance for them was not to say "no" to this or that, but to defy everything. Their Ur forced them in everything to the mystery. For us, passive defiance can come out like we are sulking over an issue. They couldn't sulk over an issue; they had to sulk over everything or the totality. In other words, they could hang on to self-depreciation, as a sort of passive defiance. It is to defy the mystery, to refuse possibility.

What I have tried to get out is the spirit edge or spirit problem of the Subasian. Or again, this has been an attempt to show where they are wrestling with the Lord. As glazed, impotent, crushed and defiant people today; they can come out of the grave, pick up their lives, affirm their passion to relate the world to the religious, to be the religious people, to be concerned for Sub-Asia and the world, and finally the "all" which is the first and last. This released them to take up possibility in the form of responsibility for their own life, church and the world, to be creative, to be responsible for the world in the dimension of the spirit and to embody the globality of their lives as a sign of the embodiment of the "all." The Subasians are a great people and will in the future more and more get out to the world their spirit gift.

CONCLUSION

The response to the III was overwhelming. In fact, we were worried when we began because a lot of the response was so good. We were concerned if we were really getting the material across. From the preceding you can see why this was part of our great desire to discern their spirit edge.

Our mood chart maybe helps to further illuminate this. They came in "high" and hit RS-1 and went down. They made some decisions and began to come up on almost a straight line slope with up and down wiggles in it. The fifth week was when we redid our whole curriculum rhythm, and had the focusing on the practical which was a release from the head-on theological pressure. Here, the mood continued to go up, but a funny thing happened. They began to just spin in a vortex. I expected them to

either break out in some sort of religious revival or just thumb their nose at us and leave. This whirlwind was happening within groups and within themselves. They would oscillate up and down trying to make a decision. Radical decisions were finalized almost to a man. With the proper follow-up there is a great possibility for the spirit movement to mushroom all over the place.

One thing I can assure you about the ITI graduates from Singapore. Some people have criticized these men because they have not done what the critics thought the graduates should have done. That is baloney. Those graduates were marked men. They know they were marked men. They're spirit men. They knew where they had to go and what they had to do! And what I think this last ITI has done is give them the kind of base so they could pick up the others and begin to move out. The follow-up can reap a great harvest from it and establish a new kind of base in India.